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JOSEPH POPE

OF

MR. GOLDWIN SMITH,

AT THE

BANQUET

OF THE

Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York,

NOVEMBER 20, 1888.

NEW-YORK:

PRESS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

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IN responding to the toast, "Our Relations with Canada—May all our differences be amicably adjusted, and our intercourse become increasingly reciprocal and profitable," MR. GOLDWIN SMITH spoke as follows :

MR. PRESIDENT :

As a Canadian, I have the greatest pleasure in responding to this toast. Such an expression of good will, on the part of such a body of American citizens as the Chamber of Commerce of New-York towards Canada would be welcome at any time, but is specially welcome at this time, when there has been a little misunderstanding, not between the two communities, but among the diplomatists and politicians. Let me assure you, that among the great mass of Canadians your friendly sentiments will find a cordial response. As you have some gentlemen among you whose delight it is to twist the tail of the lion, so we have some whose delight it is to twitch the feathers of the eagle, but their number is small, though they take care that the public shall not overlook their existence. The imperial bird, probably, feels it as little as the royal beast. Both sets know pretty well that nothing serious will ever happen, and that they are not likely ever to be called upon to face the shot. Why, there are a million of Canadians already on the south of the line ; people who swagger about iron-clads forget that they would be bombarding their own sons and brothers. As to the Fisheries question, I believe you will agree with me, that if diplomacy cannot settle it soon and amicably, the pay of the diplomatists ought to be stopped. It is political party that breeds all the trouble. Let two members of the Chamber of Commerce of New-York meet two members of the Board of Trade of Toronto, and the question would be settled in a few hours. There are some of us, however, who look forward to a more complete and lasting

settlement of all commercial questions between Canada and the United States than any Fisheries Treaty can afford. We look forward to a settlement conceived in the spirit of those British statesmen who, after the disastrous schism in our race, desired, as far as the circumstances of the case would permit, to get back to happier relations, and, instead of our becoming mere aliens and foreigners to each other, to have an amicable partition of the Anglo-Saxon Empire. The Fisheries dispute will be at rest forever, when the fisheries and the coasting trade are common to us all.

I had the honor, some time ago, to receive from your President a letter of inquiry on the subject of Commercial Union. I believe I may say, with confidence, that the subject is taking a strong hold on the minds of our Canadian people. The eyes of our people have been opened as they have not been for a long time, if they ever were before, to the advantages of unrestricted trade with their own continent. All our great natural industries—those of the farmer, the lumberman, the ship-owner and the fisherman—desire the removal of the tariff wall. Even of our manufacturers, only the weaker class object; the stronger are ready for the open market. You know that party ties, even when very irrational, are very strong, and at bye elections it is difficult to break them; but even at our bye elections popular interest in the question has begun to tell, and at our next general election our trade relations with the United States are evidently going to be the main issue. To me it has always seemed that the map settles the question. Nature has manifestly made this continent an economical whole, ordaining that its products, Northern and Southern, shall supplement each other, and that all its inhabitants, with their varied gifts and industries, shall combine in creating its common store of wealth. She has unified it by the great waterways, and where she has run chains of mountains, it has been from north to south, not from east to west. Her behest has been completed by the railway system which has bound us, and is daily binding us closer together, and which Separatists help, with strange inconsistency, to develop, while they set themselves against the extension of commercial and general relations. To run a customs line across this continent, cutting off its northern margin commercially from the rest, is surely to fight against nature, and reject the benefits which she offers with outstretched hands. Viewed politically, the map of Canada presents a vast and unbroken domain, including the North Pole, and equalling in area the territory of the United States. But, viewed economically, it presents four separate blocks of territory, having hardly any natural connection

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with each other, while each is naturally connected with the country immediately to the south of it. There are the Maritime Provinces, cut off by a wide wilderness from old Canada, French and English; old Canada, cut off by another wilderness and by Lake Superior from the newly opened prairie region of the North-West; and the prairie region cut off by a triple chain of mountains from British Columbia—while the Maritime Provinces are economically connected with the Northeastern States of the Union; old Canada, with New-York and Pennsylvania; the prairie region, with Dakota and Minnesota, which are divided from it only by a conventional line; and British Columbia, with the Pacific Territories and States. If you happen to see the map prefixed to the "Handbook of Commercial Union," published by the Toronto Commercial Union Club, the great facts of the economical case, and the conclusion to which they point, will be placed at once before your eyes. The attempt to force an inter-provincial trade has failed, and each province practically is almost confined to its own market.

It is needless to tell you that Canada, if she could only be opened up and get access for her products to their natural market, is a great storehouse of wealth. She has minerals of almost every kind and in immense abundance, and more native copper than any other country in the world, all waiting for a market, and for the free ingress of American machinery and American capital. She has abundance of lumber, which, however, is being largely wasted, and will continue to be wasted till the lumber of this continent is brought into a common stock, assessed at its real value and husbanded accordingly. She has fish, not only in her seas, but in her great northwestern lakes, whence, if the trade were open, they would find their way to the tables of your Middle States. She has barley and other special farm products, favored by her soil and climate; she has healthy stock and horses, the demand for which among you is very large. She is a great treasure-house of nature, which awaits the key of American capital and enterprise to unlock it. She is, as has been truly said, "rich by nature, poor only by policy." She is far richer than Scotland was before her commercial union with England; yet England gained greatly by that union, though Scotland, perhaps, gained still more. It has been said that the products of the two countries, being similar, it is not likely that there would be much trade between them. Facts confute that assertion. Wherever an opening is made in the tariff wall by the remission of a duty, as in the case of eggs, trade rushes through; even when there is no remission its tide beats against and overleaps the barrier

with a force that shows how great the volume would be if the barrier were removed. As it is, our trade with you is eighty-two millions, while our trade with Great Britain, whose ports are perfectly open to us, is no more than eighty-nine millions; so that, allowance being made for undervaluation at the customs and for smuggling, which abounds, as it was sure to do, under a high tariff and along an open frontier, the difference is already very small. You take foreign products to the amount of sixty-one millions annually, with all of which Canada could supply you, taking your goods in return.

If you need Canada's lumber and minerals, and her fish and barley, she needs those things which only the wealthier and more scientific country can produce to advantage, and on a sufficiently large scale. The Canadian market will be opened to you as well as your markets to Canada. Let Detroit say whether this is not to be desired.

It was urged by one of your number, to whom I was talking just before dinner, that the bargain between Canada and the United States would not be fair, because Canada would open to Americans a market of only five millions in return for her admission to a market of sixty-five millions. But this, I venture to think, is an illusion. The five millions, like any other five millions, included within the commercial pale, like the five millions of this State of New-York, would only receive their share of the general advantage, and would contribute as much as they received. Besides, when these resources were developed by access to a good market, the five millions would rapidly become ten; their wealth would increase as well as their numbers, and their power of purchasing American goods would increase with their wealth. The people of Canada are industrious, energetic and frugal; they will add their full share to the common stock of prosperity.

In removing the internal Customs line, it would be necessary, of course, to assimilate the seaboard tariffs, otherwise there would be smuggling through the country, of which the tariff was lower into that of which the tariff was higher. But the tariffs have approached each other so much that this difficulty would hardly be insuperable. When rival pretensions have to be adjusted, molehills of difficulty are apt to swell into mountains; but when mutual benefits are to be enjoyed, mountains of difficulty often shrink into molehills. Canada, in consideration of the great advantages which she would reap, might well consent to yield a point to the country which has the far larger interest and the far longer coast line.

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Observe that the principle of Commercial Union applies merely to the internal trade of the continent. We do not raise the general question between protection and free trade, which divided your political parties in the recent election. We do not meddle with the seaboard tariff otherwise than for the purpose of assimilation. We only say a line of custom houses drawn across this continent, whether between New-York and Pennsylvania or between New-York and Ontario, is, on any hypothesis, a nuisance, and ought to be removed. The Protectionist, if he likes, may regard Commercial Union as the completion of the protected area. Both parties here, apparently, are for reduction of revenue, and Commercial Union gives you reduction of revenue and extension of trade at the same time.

Nor do we touch any political question. The Executive of our Commercial Union Club, which is the special organ of the movement, comprises men of both political parties, and men who, like myself, do not belong to any political party at all. We want a verdict on the straight commercial question, whether internal free trade will not be beneficial to the commerce and industry of this continent. We want a verdict on that question apart from all the political issues with which, in the vortex of party politics, it has been mixed. The body to which I have now the honor of speaking is one which can give such a verdict, because it is one of those bodies which, while politicians and diplomatists are vexing the world with disputes, often of an unprofitable kind, concerns itself with the real and substantial interests of the community. We are told that the world must always be governed by party, and that there is no other possible way of carrying on free institutions. I suspect we would soon be in a bad way if the realm of commerce and industry were not practically governed by its own chiefs, men raised to their positions by genuine qualities, and who have happily hitherto used their power, in the main, with a firm and just hand. But if party government is to be at all tolerable, party, in its struggles for power, must respect the bread of the people.

You cannot take up a Canadian newspaper, or read the Canadian correspondence of one of your own journals, without seeing that Canada is debating her political destiny, and that there is great diversity of opinion among us. Some, mostly of the official class, look forward to perpetual or, at least, indefinite continuance in the state of a dependency. Some cherish the hope that Canada, in spite of her want of compactness and the French wedge in her heart, will

become an independent nation. Some think that the shadow can be made to go back on the dial of colonial history, and that Canada, in common with the other colonies, will surrender a part of her self-government to the government of an Imperial Federation. Others there are who believe that the English-speaking race upon this continent will some day be one people. As it was one people before the civil war of the last century, so they believe that it will in time be one people again, and that England, well advised as to her true interest, will applaud and bless the union. Without the consent of England, Canada will do nothing. To Canada, at all events, England, according to her lights, has been a good mother. What nobody in his senses desires is forcible annexation, which would give you disaffected citizens, and introduce discord into the vitals of the republic. A despot, when he annexes, can send down a viceroy ; you would have to give the ballot, which would be used by unwilling citizens for the purposes of their discontent. If you want union at all, it is a free and equal union, a union of common interest and of the heart, such as a citizen of either country may advocate without treason, and welcome without dishonor. In the meantime, while the political destiny of the two countries is working itself out, why should not our industry and commerce enjoy the advantages of continental free trade ?

Let me personally thank you, Mr. President and gentlemen, for the honor and pleasure of being here as your guest to-night. Twenty-four years, I believe, have passed since, a stranger coming from England, I first experienced the courtesy of the Chamber of Commerce of New-York. It was not, I think, at one of these annual banquets, but at a re-union of some other kind. That was in the dark days of the war, though the sun of American destiny was beginning to break through the clouds. Your paper, if I recollect rightly, was at about fifty per cent. discount. After my return to England I was at a large dinner party at which some persons of distinction were present. I was the only man at that table who believed that you would pay your debt. Now it is not you that do not want to pay the debt, but the debt that does not want to be paid. The French monarchy was the mightiest in Europe, and an annual deficit, which at last did not exceed twenty-five millions of dollars, was sufficient to lay it in the dust.

I almost feel that I have been presumptuous in addressing such an assembly as this on such a subject as the trade relations between the two countries, being, as I am, nothing but a private Canadian citizen. I have, however, at least no interest or motive other

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than the desire that our Canadian people should enjoy the fair
earnings of their industry and the measure of prosperity which
nature has designed for them. Let me once more cordially re-
ciprocate the kind and courteous words of the toast to which I am
responding, and assure you that they will find no doubtful echo in
the hearts of the great mass of the Canadian people.